

Slough Borough Council

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

DATE: 8th October 2025

SUBJECT: Schedule of Code of Conduct Complaints Update

CHIEF OFFICER: Sukdave Ghuman, Monitoring Officer

CONTACT OFFICER: Nick Pontone, Principal Democratic Services Officer

WARD(S): All

EXEMPT: No

APPENDICES: Appendix 1 – Schedule of Code of Conduct Complaints

1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Standards Committee on the progress of councillor complaints under the Councillor's Code of Conduct since the last meeting on the 20th of March 2025.

Recommendations:

The Committee is recommended to note the outcome of complaints under the Code of Conduct as set out in Appendix 1.

Reason:

The report is for information only. The Councillors' Code of Conduct is a key part of the Council's Ethical Framework and this report updates Members on activity since the previous meeting in March 2025.

Commissioners Review

It is important that the Council continues to provide regular updates on Code of Conduct complaints, which should encourage adherence to the code and fosters transparency, accountability, public trust, and promote high standards of conduct in public office.

The Commissioners are content with this report being considered.

2 Report

Introduction

- 2.1 The Council set up a separate Standards Committee in 2023 to assist the Council to meet its duty under s.27 of the Localism Act 2011. Part of the Committee's remit is to advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the

Councillor's Code of Conduct and to determine written complaints made against an elected member alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct.

Complaints made under Code of Conduct in 2024/25

- 2.2 There are currently two formal complaints from the 2024/25 municipal year which remain in progress and open. The first being complaint (2425/03) which was referred to in the March 20th report. Workload pressures for the Monitoring Officer contributed to an initial delay in engaging with the subject member in person to discuss the issues as part of the preliminary assessment of the complaint. The complaint is currently under investigation and awaiting a final report.
- 2.3 The second complaint (2425/04) is also currently under investigation further to a detailed discussion with the Independent Person. This complaint (2425/04) regards an unrelated matter against the same councillor.

Complaints made under the Code of Conduct 2025/26

- 2.4 There is currently one formal complaint (2526/01) that has been lodged in the municipal year 2025/26. This complaint was referred for investigation and the Monitoring Officer will consider the investigation report which has very recently been received.
- 2.5 Several other 'complain about a councillor' forms were submitted to the Monitoring Officer, which were reviewed but did not relate to the conduct of a councillor and instead were about an officer or service issue. All such forms are routinely referred to corporate complaints to be logged and responded to in accordance with Council's complaints procedure.
- 2.6 The Council has received a further complaint which has been referred to the complainant for resubmission under the formal complaint code of conduct procedure.

Update on the complaint of failure to observe the Councillors' Code of Conduct

- 2.7 In relation to complaint reference (2324/07 and 2324/08), The Local Government Association has been commissioned to provide an experienced LGA peer member to provide the training requested by Standards Committee at its meeting on 11 March 2025. Officers are currently awaiting a reply from the Councillor in terms of availability and will thereafter arrange for the training to be provided.

2. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

- 3.1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report and in submitting a consultation response.

3.2 Legal implications

- 3.2.1 Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to put in place arrangements under which it can investigate an allegation of a breach of the code made in writing and, if it considers that it warrants investigation, requires that the authority appoint at least one independent person whose views must be sought after it has made an investigation and before it takes a decision. The Council appointed Mr R Tomkinson as the Council's independent person from 19 May 2022.

3.3 Risk management implications

- 3.3.1 Having an effective code of conduct in place setting out the standards of behaviour for elected members and an effective system for managing and monitoring such behaviour is a key part of the Council's ethical framework and risk management system. As a public body, the Council should act lawfully and in the public interest and failing to do so opens it up to challenge.
- 3.3.2 Decisions of the council can be challenged where they have not been made on a rational basis or having followed a fair process. Ensuring that elected members take decisions in an appropriate and properly informed way, including declining to take part in decision-making when they have a relevant interest, will help ensure fair and lawful decisions and reduce the risk of successful legal challenge.

3.4 Environmental implications

- 3.4.1 None.

3.5 Equality implications

- 3.5.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to pay due regard to the need to
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.5.2 The Code of Conduct requires members to promote equalities and not discriminate unlawfully against any person. It explains the central role that elected members have in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the Council's performance and strategic aims and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.
- 3.5.3 The Council has set six equality objectives. This includes an objective that political and executive leaders demonstrate personal knowledge and understanding of local communities and continue to show commitment to reducing inequality.

4. Background Papers

None